

Salt Lake City: Scattered Clouds 87°

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## Salt Lake City, state seek EPA remediation of contaminated plume

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue, Deseret News

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SALT LAKE CITY — City, county and state officials are urging the Environmental Protection Agency to declare a contaminated site on Salt Lake City's east side as eligible for long-term remediation.

Such a designation on the agency's National Priority List means cleanup can occur on a more accelerated and disciplined schedule and federal funds will be made available.

The site of despoiled surface water springs is between 800 South and 1000 South and 1300 East and 1100 East, where a chemical called perchloroethene or PCE has been detected.

Mayor Ralph Becker, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality have issued formal support for a U.S. EPA proposal to list a contaminated site in Salt Lake City on the agency's National Priority List.

The discovery of PCE happened in August of 2010 and is believed to be connected to a previously identified groundwater plume of PCE near 700 South and 1600 East. That plume was initially discovered in the 1990s after the chemical was found in an irrigation well at Mount Olivet Cemetery.

While the full extent of the plume is not known, the site appears to cover approximately 300 acres. Officials in Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department and the state Department of Environmental Quality fear the plume could migrate if left uncontrolled. The EPA's designation of the site as a priority for remediation means there will be an investigation and assessment of the risks to human health.

Mayor Ralph Becker, in urging the designation, wrote a letter to Amanda Smith, head of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, relaying the city's concern over the situation.

"Because of the potential community risks associated with (the) site, Salt Lake City prefers that EPA begin its NPL determination process at the earliest opportunity, rather than delay future work," Becker wrote.

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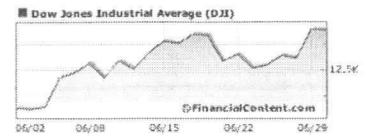
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Based on that local support, the EPA says it intends to propose listing the 700 South 1600 East PCE Plume in the September 2012 Federal Register. At that time, the agency will open an official public comment period so that members of the community and other affected parties can submit comments related to the proposed listing. In addition to EPA's formal public comment period, Salt Lake City will be reaching out to community councils and neighborhoods to provide information and solicit input regarding the proposed listing.

If there is positive community support, a final NPL determination may be decided as early as April 2013.



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Amy Joi O'Donoghue is the environmental reporter the Deseret News, specializing in coverage of issues that affect land, air, water and energy development. She has worked here since 1998 and has been an assistant city more ..

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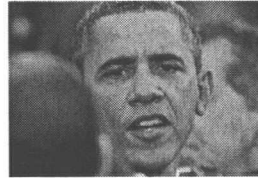
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